Yang—the latter of whom had done so much to give the state of Ch'm the organization which had enabled it to seize the Empire—and they bore some resemblance to suggestions of a Han dynasty statesman and to the reforms of Wang Mang and his assistants. For some of them precedent could have been claimed in long established practice. Wang An-shih professed to base his plan upon the principles of ancient sages honored by the Confucian school and prepared commentaries on some of the classical books which attempted to show that these latter sanctioned it. He made much of the *Chou* ***Li,*** that idealistic political program which dated from the late Chou or the Han.

However, Wang's schemes were revolutionary. They involved an enhanced paternalism on the part of the state, the assumption by the government of much larger responsibilities than under the earlier years of the Sung, and deprivations for the wealthy. They constituted what in the modern Occident would be called a kind of state socialism. They were, moreover, sufficiently radical to bring down on the heads of their proponents the vigorous denunciations of conservative scholars and statesmen. These contended for the earlier policies of the dynasty which favored more *laissez faire* and the Confucian theory of the rule of the prince by good example rather than by force.

In proposing his reforms Wang An-shih seems to have been entirely sincere and public-spirited. Frugal in his private life even to the neglect of care for his own person, having the welfare of the common people passionately at heart, serenely confident in the righteousness of his cause and in the wisdom of his program, and an ardent advocate by word and pen, he belongs to a type familiar in many ages and countries.

Wang rose to high office and for a time the Emperor gave him free rein. He had a few loyal and intelligent lieutenants, but the majority of the scholars of repute, among them many really distinguished names, notably an early patron who later turned against him—Ou-yang Hsiu (1007-1072)—would have none of him and vehemently argued against him. The opposition is generally known as the Yuan Yu party, but it did not enjoy internal harmony and in turn was divided into several factions. The debate continued through most of the last four reigns of the Northern Sung and echoes of it were heard after the southward migration